

MIAMI MEETINGS

CETT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

May 29, 2002

**Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity
No. HNE-I-00-00-00038-00**

CETT program objectives

The purpose of the program is to upgrade teacher skills in the teaching of reading in the early primary grades (1-3).

The program is complicated to explain. Conceivably, the beneficiaries are very many: schools, students, teachers, parents, and others. The program perceptions are different for all of those groups.

The goal of the program is to provide innovative leadership to strengthen reading instruction and increase reading skills of primary-school students. The program purpose is to improve skills of teachers to become more effective reading instructors in the early grades. We hope to encourage a culture that motivates students to read to learn and learn to read.

The program will capture best practices occurring in the region and put them together in a set of diagnostic set of tools, of materials and methodologies. The idea is to develop a methodology to learn to read. The program can use the same sets of materials all around the region to learn to read. Each country can tap into best practices. The program will explore the use of technology to bring advantages of learning to read to the most disadvantaged and get to the largest number of beneficiaries possible. There are many benefits to sharing resources and developing materials that can be used throughout Central America, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

Three active components and two helping components make up the program. The three active components are:

- The development of diagnostic tools to assist teachers to assess why a student is not reading.
- The development of materials keyed to those diagnostic tools. For example, if the child is having decoding problem, then the teacher can use those materials to address the problem.
- The development of training for teachers, which will provide a manual on how to teach reading. This training will give teachers practical experience in teaching and an opportunity to practice newly learned methodologies and techniques.

The two helping components are:

- Applied research to inform all of three active components. All the materials and teaching tools would be based on ongoing testing and assessment of teaching methods, as well as best practices and successes in the region and the hemisphere.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) to distribute the product and use appropriate methods to reach all beneficiaries. We are thinking of electronic technology, but it could be print, video, Web based, radio, TV, and/or a mix of these types of technology.

In addition to these five components, previous meetings in Central America have suggested we need a social marketing component.

- Social marketing would focus attention on creating the political will to address reading problems and why many children are dropping out of school (children are dropping out for a variety of reasons, but often failure to learn to read is an identified reason).

Another part of the program is the partnering with the private sector to support the CETT program. We want to complement the \$20 million in USAID funds with an additional \$20 million from the private sector to a total of \$40 million. We also hope to solicit additional support from the U.S. government once the program is up and running and demonstrating success.

What are the outputs we hope to achieve? Although there are many outputs we could list, some of them might include:

- Training would be provided for 15,000 teachers in the hemisphere, which would have an impact on a million children in the hemisphere (direct impact). Roughly 7 percent of the teachers in the hemisphere would receive training.
- In Central America, 6,000 teachers would receive training. (Program could have substantially more beneficiaries depending on success of ICT.)
- 6,000 teachers would be trained in diagnostic reading assessment, and provided with a manual of reading strategies.
- 6,000 teachers would be provided with a manual for classroom management.
- 6,000 teachers would have training in teaching a multigrade class.
- 6,000 teachers would have training in using child-centered teaching strategies.
- Some number of administrators would be trained to support teachers in the use of techniques.
- Schools would be equipped with reading materials. These materials would be made available on a Web site.
- Action research would be disseminated to all the schools.
- ICT would be part of teacher training. Teachers would also be trained to use ICT in the classroom.
- A clearinghouse of teaching materials would be available on the Web.
- School community-private sector partnerships would be developed throughout the region.

We want the program to collect and distribute the best materials and best training methodologies (all based on action research). These models for teaching reading successfully would be put into a package for teachers to use and would be made available for all teachers in the region. The program would thus provide teachers with a core set of materials to change the way reading is done in the hemisphere. The program would also do pilot testing throughout implementation to measure the impact of these materials and methods on children.

Parameters of the CETT program

It is difficult to dictate parameters for the program so I have separated them in these three categories: non-negotiable givens, USAID preferences or recommendations, and outstanding issues.

The six non-negotiable givens are:

1. The focus of the program must be on reading in the early primary grades.
2. The focus of the program should be improving teacher performance in the classroom, not institutional strengthening.
3. The organizational structure must be managerially efficient. The program does not have enough resources. The management structure must be cost effective to ensure that resources are delivered to the classroom.
4. The program must be designed to benefit all of the countries in the subregion. We need a pan-subregional (Central America, Dominican Republic, and Mexico) view.
5. The program must have a participatory process. The recommendations of this group will go to all the other countries in the subregion to review. We may have to work to market that plan. (In the end, USAID is the final arbitrator of the project plan.)
6. A Central American institution must provide the base for the program. That is to say that the program should not be based in the Dominican Republic or Mexico.

The eight preferences include:

1. Build on existing capacity. Work with successful institutions, reinforce existing strengths and support current reform efforts.
2. Start small and expand after we demonstrate positive results.
3. Work with innovative programs, innovative schools, and change agents. Work with those who have demonstrated a commitment to making a change in this area.
4. Build on analytical work we have already developed and other inputs we have already received. This work forms the basis for decision making.
5. Make a grant to one institution with a pass-through to other institutions. Determine a scope of work for each organization working on this program. (Each would have a budget associated with this program, but the money would pass through to each institution from the grantee. Forming a consortium and setting up by-laws etc. would take very long, so we want a single grantee.)
6. Participation in this meeting does not guarantee a role in the leadership of the program. The design team at this meeting and USAID are free to mix and match institutions to do the best job.
7. Need an institution with a pan-Central American perspective, one that can coordinate from country to country.
8. Maintain flexibility in program design. Need to maintain creativity, with many potholes along the way to handle.

Outstanding issues include:

1. We want to focus on rural, disadvantaged students, but how do we use ICT to reach these populations which have poor access to technology?
2. We need to promote a win-win situation. Do we also then promote an organizational structure that is managerially inefficient? Let's streamline and not be concerned with how much we are winning.
3. We are working under a difficult time constraint. The money is here now and it behooves us to get this project underway as soon as possible. If we dally, people in the current administration will think we are not interested. Ultimately, we want a cooperative agreement, but there are many details to work out. We might consider a "grant within a grant." In the first year, we could develop a first phase of planning. The second-year money would be contingent on a detailed implementation plan.

USAID has three options for funding projects:

1. Grant: USAID gives a grant when an institution has a set of objectives perfectly aligned with USAID's. For example, USAID gives a grant to UNESCO to provide health services to Bangladesh; UNESCO then uses these monies to continue a project that is already underway.
2. Cooperative Agreement: USAID uses a cooperative agreement when there is a coincidence of interests between USAID and the institution. This type of funding does not place lots of control over the organization. The institution develops a plan to implement the project and provides a set of goals. USAID works with well-established, well-organized institutions with well-established track records through cooperative agreements. USAID and the institution agree to cooperate with one another to achieve a certain goal.
3. Contract: USAID uses a contract usually with a corporation or an NGO. This mechanism basically directs the organization to go and do certain tasks within a certain country or region for USAID.

Central America and USAID can do this program together through a cooperative agreement. We want to bring together U.S. government funds with institutions in Central America to achieve the goals of the CETT program.